

Madam Chairperson and distinguished Committee members, thank you for taking time to hold this hearing on such an important issue.

I grew up in a housing project in Washington D.C. with my eight brothers and sisters. My mother, a high school graduate, supported our family making roughly \$15,000 a year as the sole breadwinner.

When I heard about downpayment assistance, I was living in a basement unit in Section 8 housing with my four children. I knew it was time to get out when my eldest son, then 17, was robbed by a group of kids in our neighborhood for his tennis shoes. He had also started falling in with the wrong crowd and getting into fights.

I was worried for the welfare of my youngest son, then twelve, because I didn't want him to follow the same path. I prayed to God to take us away from that place.

At the time, my husband, who was still my boyfriend back then, and I both worked full time jobs to afford our \$795 a month rent and try to make ends meet, but were not able to save any money for a downpayment on a house. Nevertheless, we knew that owning our own home was the answer, so we went looking for properties.

When we found our dream home, our real estate agent introduced us to a lender who was familiar with homeowner assistance programs. They walked us through the process, and we were comfortable when we decided to go with downpayment assistance through

Ameridream. One of the best parts of the process was learning how to budget our income and save. Ameridream provided us with so much information and taught us about things we never knew before.

Our home has four bedrooms with a full dining room, kitchen, sitting room and family room on a half acre of land in Fort Washington, Maryland. It borders government land so there are often cows grazing – much different than our previous basement view.

When we bought our home in 2003, it was \$173,000. I this is a lot of money to many people in the country, but for DC, this was really cheap. Now I am happy to say that the value of my house has doubled in the three years that I have live there. I am also proud to say that we have never been late on a mortgage payment.

Without downpayment assistance programs like Ameridream, I know in my heart that I would have lost my dream home. In the time it would have taken for me to save up my down payment my house would have been sold. Plus, I would have needed to stay in that desperate living situation until I was able to scrape together this money.

The most important part of my story is how downpayment assistance enabled me to give my children a better life. My youngest son is now a 4.0 student studying criminal justice at Gibbs College and is currently working as an intern for a state attorney. I cannot imagine what his future would have been like if we'd stayed in our old neighborhood.

When I heard that downpayment assistance was in jeopardy, I was very surprised. I couldn't believe the government would cut a program that is working so well.

Downpayment assistance helps people like me to get away from lifestyles that threaten their families and the futures of their children. Programs like Ameridream enable families with the opportunity to have a choice and take charge of their futures.

I beg you to consider my story as you evaluate these programs.

Thank you Madam Chairperson and distinguished members of the committee. I am now happy to take questions.

Beverly Queen

Fort Washington, Maryland